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ABSTRACT

Intended for use as a guide for presenters in video productions, this booklet describes important aspects of the production of effective television presentations. It is suggested that a visit to the Texas Education Agency Tape Lab for a short orientation to their production facilities and a preproduction meeting with its staff would help ensure an effective production. The orientation provides an opportunity to become familiar with the studio, the instructional support available, and the technical staff which assists in the production of the presentation. Also included are suggestions for scripting video productions; prerequisites for effective presentations; preparing visuals for television; guidelines for selecting appropriate clothing for television; and meanings and descriptions of various hand cues. Diagrams of the hand cues are also provided. (DJR)

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A Guide to Video Presentations

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Video Production in Retrospect

Educational facilities across the state, which first used video to tape lectures to be replayed at other times or places, now employ it as a research tool, a feedback device and as a major transmitter of information.

Most educational institutions have centralized video production systems; others have video production equipment specially selected and allocated to individual departments.

Many schools and universities produce documentaries or special instructional programs to be used in-house as well as for distribution to other institutions.

The following booklet has been developed to help you, as a presenter in a video production, to be more aware of the problems that may arise within your presentation. By no means is this booklet a list of all critical situations that could arise, but it will be helpful in keeping you alert to important aspects associated with television production.

Preproduction Planning

tues 2 Tape Lab

Most presenters have discovered that a short orientation to the Texas Education Agency Tape Lab is a very good way to ensure an effective presentation.

The orientation will give you an opportunity to become familiar with the studio, the instructional support available to you and the technical staff that you will be working with in your presentation.

During the orientation, your ideas will be reviewed by the producer/director to determine your needs and to answer any questions that you might have. Your orientation should be scheduled prior to the actual scripting of your program. A work session should be scheduled at least two weeks prior to the taping in order to review the script and determine specific production techniques. To arrange for an orientation/preproduction meeting, call (512) 463-9047.

Thinking Visually: Writing for the Ear

Most of us have a lot more practice writing letters, reports and term papers than we do scripting video productions.

Unfortunately, just about everything that your high school and college English professors taught you about composition can be thrown out the window when you sit down to write for television—except perhaps for grammar!

Video, of course, is an entirely different medium, one that relies on images and spoken words. The most difficult task for

a novice scriptwriter is how to turn verbal information into visual communication.

Visuals have a language of their own; most people within a culture are more adept at "reading" the gross visual cues found in their environment. For example: the skull and cross bones symbolizes poison, a nod signifies approval.

When first going through a sequence of information, you should constantly ask yourself, "How can I visualize this?" If you are showing a demonstration of some process, the subject of your visual presentation is evident.

It is easy to present a "talking head," but before you take that route, try a few mental gymnastics to see if there is a better way. Try to draft a picture or a sketch of the concept. For example: If you had to communicate with a foreigner or a deaf person, how would you get the message across? The most important factor here is "What should people **DO** if they follow your message?"

Generally, the narrative portion of a script is outlined first, but remember that each visual ties in directly with the accompanying audio. There is nothing more detracting and confusing to the audience than trying to relate two divergent ideas presented simultaneously.

Production Principles:

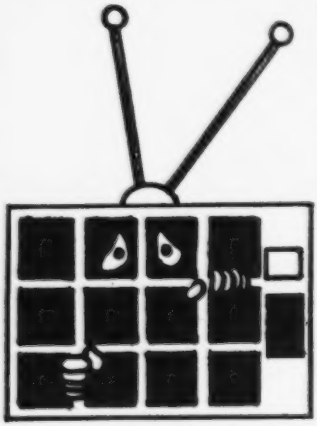
- Get the viewer's attention first.
- People will pay attention to something a little different from what they expect; too similar or too different have the same effect—no attention.
- People will be more motivated to learn something that has a direct influence on their lives.
- Let the viewer know what the objectives are and what is expected of him.
- Provide introductions and conclusions. "Tell 'em what you're going to say, tell 'em and tell 'em what you just told 'em."
- Provide a structure to the program. Just as writing has the structure of paragraphs, underlined words and chapters, use transitions and visual emphasis.
- Tell as much as possible of the story through the visual channel.
- Show the viewer objects and processes from the same angle that he will view them in real life.
- Change the visual and aural pace within the program to relieve monotony.
- Use special effects such as character generated graphics only when they add to the information.

- Show common mistakes as well as correct procedures.
- Make sure that the program is authentic and accurate from the audience's point of view.
- Start from something that the viewer is familiar with; do not overwhelm him with complexities too soon.
- Display unfamiliar terms on the screen as they are spoken, so the viewer can see and hear them.

Prerequisite for Effective Presentations:

- Be natural—speak in conversational tone and language.
- Establish eye contact with the camera. Treat it as if it were a member of the audience.
- Vary your presentation. Intersperse visuals with lecture and activities just as you would do in an on-site presentation.
- Prior to your program, be sure you have reviewed directional cues with the floor manager.

Visibility Through Visuals



- The most important thing to remember when preparing visuals for television is the three to four ratio. A television screen is three units high and four units wide. Regardless of size of a visual, it is preferable that it fit into this ratio. For example, an effective visual might be twelve inches high by sixteen inches wide.
- Do not put too much information on one visual. The viewing audience must be able to read visuals quickly with immediate understanding. Use more visuals if necessary instead of crowding all of information onto one.
- Keep visuals simple. Detailed artwork or design elements will not show up well on camera. An extra-large type element (Orator or Bulletin) should be used for typed materials. Regular typewritten pages are unacceptable as visuals.
- Overhead transparencies are not the best visuals to use on television. However, they may be transferred to 8½ by 11 light blue paper for more clarity. If using this method, keep information to a minimum.
- Original artwork should be used for visual materials. Photocopies lose sharpness and clarity.
- When using photographs, a matte finish should be used. Glossy photos reflect light and tend to cause glares on the screen.

- Character Generated Graphics and messages can also be created within our studio setting. This is a form of an electronic typewriter. If you are interested in using this device, copies of the information should be given to the director two weeks prior to the production. This is an excellent medium of creating messages and transmitting important information.

Dressing for Success: The Camera and You

There are varied opinions on the clothes that are especially appropriate to wear on television and the types of clothing to avoid. What we have listed here are some guidelines plus some advice from our own experience.

Clothing Do's:

- The camera loves all shades of blue. Neutral colors such as tan, navy, yellow, mauve and medium-to-dark pink are all good. If you wear a dark suit, wear a brightly colored blouse, shirt or tie with it.

- Tailored dress clothes tend to appear the best on camera. Since the camera tends to add pounds, make sure that the lines of your clothes are straight and predominantly vertical.

- For women, a heavy base make-up is recommended. Because bright lights are used in video production, you may

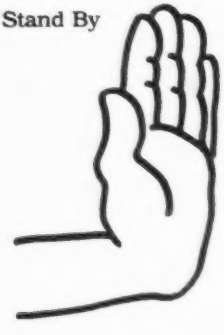
look washed out if you do not follow this important rule.

Clothing Don'ts:

- Avoid predominantly white outfits. It will be too stark. Avoid black for it looks too drab on camera. Also avoid anything with thin stripes or small checks.
- Avoid loose fitting clothes, low necklines and boat necks. You will be required to wear a clip-on microphone, and these styles are not acceptable.
- Avoid wearing shiny jewelry.

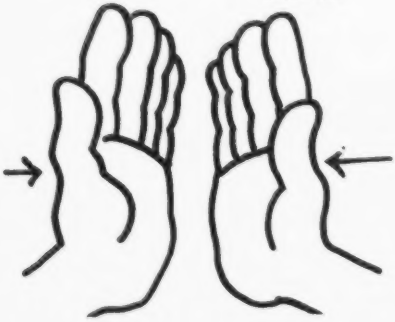
Hand Cues:

Cue	Meaning	Description
Stand By	Ready to start show Ready to record Quiet on the set	Stage Manager raises hand in air, with fingers pointing upward



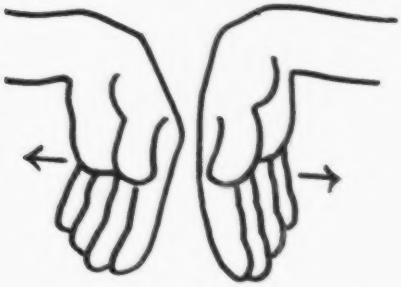
You're On Take Your Cue	Start Talking Talent is on the air	Points to performer or live camera

Get Closer Together	Talent, performers or reporters too far apart Get closer together Get closer to object of interest	Stage Manager plays an invisible accordian, bringing palms together repeatedly

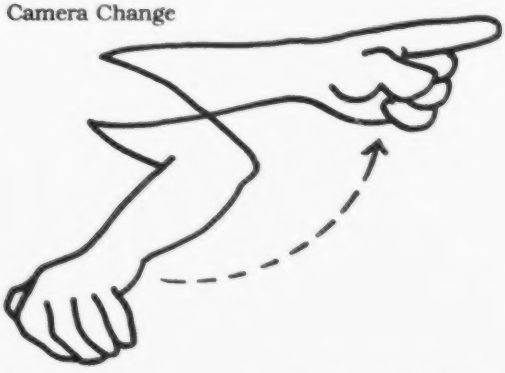


Hand Cues: *continued*

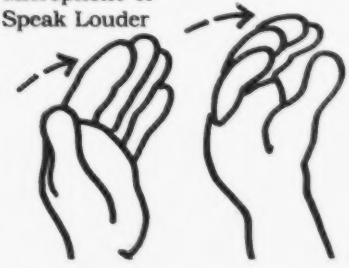
Cue	Meaning	Description
Get Farther Apart	Talent too close together, opposite of above	Stage Manager moves hands together, back to back, then spreads them sharply apart



Cue	Meaning	Description
Talk To This Camera Camera Change	Changing cameras	Stage Manager swings hands through a wide arc from camera that is on the air to the camera that will be on the air

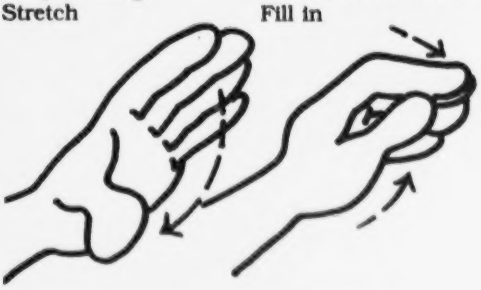


Cue	Meaning	Description
Get Closer to the Microphone or Speak Louder	Audio level too low Get closer to the mike	Stage Manager moves hands toward himself/herself or toward the mike



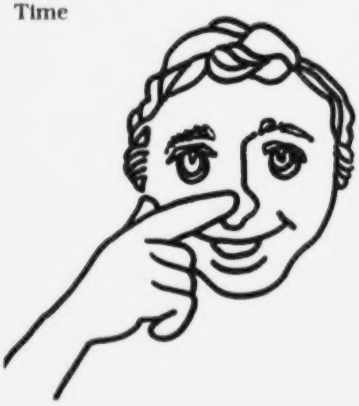
Hand Cues: continued

Cue	Meaning	Description
Keep Talking Stretch	Too much time left Fill in	Extend thumb and forefinger horizontal ly, move them like the beak of a bird



Cue	Meaning	Description
Stretch It Out Slow Down	Talking too fast	Move hands as if pulling taffy apart or stretching rubber bands.

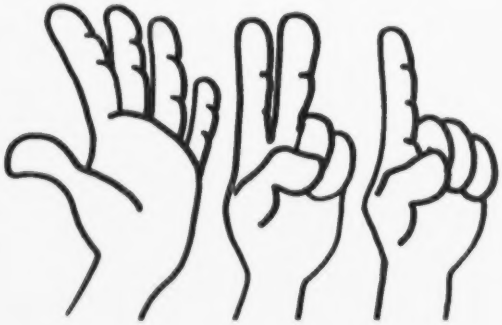
Cue	Meaning	Description
On the Nose Program on Time	Program is running right on time, no problems	Stage Manager touches nose with forefinger



Hand Cues: *continued*

Cue	Meaning	Description
O.K. All Is Well Your Position Is Fine	Well done Stay right there	Form an "O" with thumb and forefinger with other three fingers raised

Five Minutes to Go Two Minutes to Go One Minute to Go	Time cues to end of show	Raise hand with corresponding number of fingers spread apart or raise flash cards



Speed It Up	Talking too slow Running out of time	Move forefinger in circles

Hand Cues: continued

Cue	Meaning	Description
Wrap it Up	10 seconds left Come to a conclusion	Rocking or shaking of clenched fist

Cut Finish Off the Air	Segment or show is over	Stage Manager slashes own throat with forefinger or edge of hand

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